

# THE FORUM

Feb.-March 2013

Your UUP Albany Chapter Newsletter

Issue 124



## Dedicated Election Issue

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Additional candidates' statements are available on-line at [www.albany.edu/uup](http://www.albany.edu/uup).

## Chapter Elections

Jim Collins, President

Welcome to the 2013 "Election Edition" of *The Forum*.

The Albany Chapter of UUP is pleased to present to you this opportunity to meet the candidates through their statements and encourages you to participate in this year's election.

All candidates of record who are running for officer or delegate positions were given an equal opportunity to submit their statements for publication, as required.

Officer candidates are allowed to have statements up to 250 words. Delegate candidates are allowed statements up to 150 words.

Elected officers and delegates will serve a term beginning on June 1, 2013 and ending on May 31, 2015.

You are receiving a copy of this newsletter because you are a "duly signed" member of UUP.

### Election Information: What happens when?

Chapter election ballots have been mailed out from UUP Central office as of February 20-22, 2013 to individuals who were duly entitled to vote as of December 30, 2012.

**Return ballots must be received (not postmarked) at the UUP Central Office no later than Wednesday, March 20, 2013, at 5:00 pm.**

Ballots will be counted March 20-23, 2013. Results of elections will be sent to Chapter Presidents as soon as practicable after the election.

Any candidate running for office can call the Chair of the UUP Elections & Credentials Committee or UUP Statewide Secretary Eileen Landy at [\(518\) 640-6600](tel:5186406600) to make an appointment to observe the counting of any election in which they are a duly nominated candidate.

Your vote is important! Please make it count!

## Officer Candidate Statements

### President

Bret Benjamin  
Associate Professor  
English

My involvement in the Union has taught me a great deal. As a faculty member, I interacted mainly with other academics in my own department. The union is the institution that has allowed me to glimpse a broader whole. Here I can talk with co-workers, academics and professionals from across the university, who value contributing to the educational and social mission of public higher education.

Quite rightly, however, members are dismayed and angered by the path our university has followed in recent years.

Job insecurity threatens us all. Workload increases abound, with professionals absorbing extra duties in shrinking units, and academics pressed to teach more and larger courses. Micro-management, evaluation, and assessment now accompany all activity. Working conditions for contingent employees, an ever-increasing cohort, are defined by exploitation and precariousness. Revenue generation, economic calculations, and private interests drive decisions that were once made on intellectual or social grounds. Students are forced to pay more for less. We feel increasingly disconnected from one another, and disenfranchised from the decisions that affect our lives and our university.

It does not have to be this way. I believe in our capacity to effect change through collective action. I run for the office of Chapter President as a member of the Union Democracy Slate. We are committed to mobilizing members; listening to your concerns; crafting intelligent, principled solutions; and advocating aggressively for a better university. We believe that our chapter must be active, critical, diverse, and transparent. In addition to your vote, then, I ask for your participation.

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### VP Academics

Barry Trachtenberg  
History Department

The current financial crisis has been used by those who hope to privatize state government as an excuse to attack its public employees and to eliminate funding for much-needed state programs. This has been reflected in our own university system as we've witnessed the cutting of vital academic programs, dramatic hikes in our students' tuition and fees, increases in non-tenure-track faculty, the weakening of graduation requirements, and ever-greater demands placed upon faculty.

The Albany Chapter of the UUP must be at the forefront of the struggle to protect access to education and the rights of all state workers. We must build alliances with other organizations, keep the pressure on the university administration to protect our vital academic mission, and demand that the state legislature appropriately fund the SUNY budget.

Should I be elected Vice President for Academics, I will be a strong advocate on behalf of:

- the rights of contingent faculty,
- humane family leave policies,
- increased state funding for higher education,
- creating networks of support among faculty across the campus, and
- increased faculty participation in university governance.

I am proud to be a part of the Union Democracy Slate. We need strong local governance at our UAlbany chapter and I'm confident that with a reinvigorated UUP, the staff and faculty who make our university run will be well defended. Thanks for your support.

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## Assistant VP Academics

Eloise A. Brière  
O'Leary Professor  
French and Francophone Studies  
Department of Languages, Literatures and  
Cultures

Like most tenured faculty, I was convinced that tenure ensured the political protection that supports academic freedom and job security: it ensures continuing appointment. Like my colleagues in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, I believed that an international curriculum that produced students knowledgeable about, and literate in, foreign cultures and languages contributed to UAlbany's academic mission. When, with no warning, my Program was deactivated at the B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. levels in 2010, I learned how wrong my assumptions had been.

In the ensuing months, when the faculty of several deactivated programs and two Departments were excluded from any meaningful discussion with decision-makers about the future, the isolation was broken by UUP (and Save Our SUNY).

Thanks to UUP, I have educated myself about the expanded efforts to rely on online learning, and the exponential growth of contingent faculty who will never have the luxury of continued appointment or its presumed concomitant job security.

I know that I can make a difference as Assistant Vice President for Academics by listening to, and acting on behalf of my colleagues. I ask for your vote, not because I have years of experience in the service of UUP, but because the lessons of the last two years have convinced me that having a dynamic, energized UUP is one of the best protections faculty can have in preventing and solving job-related difficulties.

With officers who ask the right questions of administrators, UUP can make a difference to benefit not only faculty, but UAlbany as a whole.

## VP Professionals

Tom Hoey  
Sr. Data Communications Analyst  
Data Communications

Fellow UUP union members, I ask for your support in this election. We have put together a great leadership Slate with Bret Benjamin (President), Barry Trachtenberg (Academic VP), Eloise Briere (Asst. Academic VP), Eric Warnke (Asst. Professional VP), Rob See (Treasurer), and Janna Harton (Secretary) to lead the chapter in the next two years of what promises to be constant change.

We have a contract to review, a new University President, and lots of new buildings opening in the near future.

We will work as your representatives to insure your contract rights are protected in the University. We will also continue to support the professional development classes and social issues seminars that help our members. We are here to help you!

Please vote, it sends a message.

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## Chapter Secretary

Deborah Lafond  
Associate Librarian  
University Libraries

As an academic librarian for 17 years on this campus, I work to support student growth, voice, research goals, and also support the faculties I serve. This work and method informs my passion for putting into place ways to hear and articulate diverse knowledges, advocating for equitable information access, equitable relations, engaged scholarship, and support to students and researchers who will both become and articulate our futures.

In my work with the African Studies Association, we address resource and education divides and work toward unity in and through diversity of dialogue and experience by kindly reflecting on assumptions we

bring within the group, as we know we are valued for this work. We actively listen, understanding the consequences of forced, early action and the wisdom of waiting for openness to possibilities that do not harm. From there it is easier to envision meaningful directions.

I bring this kind of openness, experience and ability to envision this sense of belonging - to witness how we construct respect and meaning as opposed to acting upon learned behaviors of one upmanship, entitled authority, or dominance. I know I can contribute more if I am part of a body that holds this value, and I believe others will also. In my view, this kind of work is critical to articulating accessible education paths of quality and substance and I can offer concrete methods.

Volunteering for Acting Secretary beginning June 2012 meant that I stepped up in a time of transition. I ask for the opportunity to continue working in this role not as "Acting" but as elected member and as the committed officer I am.

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## Chapter Secretary

Janna Harton  
Assistant to the Chair, LLC

The university and academia in general are experiencing an unprecedented time of change. More than ever each of us, the union, the university and the community need to work hand in hand to ensure the best education for our students, the best working environment for our faculty and staff, and the best future for New York. With a new university president and continuing budget concerns, we need a unified, engaged, progressive process and I believe the Union Democracy Slate will provide that.

I have served on the UUP Executive Committee the last two years and during that time also chaired the UUP Health & Safety Committee. I've also served in a variety of other settings including the last four years on the CAS Faculty Council as both a professional and at-large representative, chair of the CAS Academic Programs Committee, CAS Faculty Council Recorder, on a Senate committee, as building manager, and have served as secretary/recorder for many other groups and campuses during my career. I am ready to lend that experience to this position.

I'm running for secretary to be part of the ongoing improvement process. I'd be honored to serve you in this role and will do my best to make a difference. I urge you too to be a part of the renewal and improvement process here at UAlbany by staying informed ([www.albany.edu/uup](http://www.albany.edu/uup)), engaged, and taking time to vote for whichever candidates you feel will best serve the need. Only in working together can we make UAlbany its best.

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## VP Contingents

Roberto J. Vives  
Director, Track and Field Program  
Athletics and Recreation

I am running to serve you as Vice President for Contingents and Professional Delegate with UUP. I have served as a Professional Delegate since 2002 and have done my best to represent your concerns. I have been a member of the Albany Chapter and Statewide Affirmative Action Committee and have also served as the Departmental Rep for the Athletic Department.

I have been a member of the University Community since 1985 as the Director of Men's and Women's Track & Field/Cross Country and have also been the Chair of Alianza Latina; served on numerous diversity committees and recently served on the President's Transition Advisory Committee.

I understand the challenges that are faced by our Contingent Faculty and Staff and will work on your behalf to improve your work experience. Thank you in advance for your vote and confidence.

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## Assistant VP Professionals

Eric Warnke  
Research IT

I have been a member of the university community for more than a decade and recently become active in UUP as an alternate delegate and the chair of the Parking committee. As the Assistant Vice President for Professionals, a new position, I will strive to assist the VP of Professionals in whatever way I can to provide for our members.

## Professional Delegate Candidate Statements

Carol H. Jewell  
Instructional Support Technician  
University Libraries

I've been a member of the Professional staff at UA for over 27 years. I have been Chair of the Disability Rights and Concerns Committee for our Chapter since 2002. I am Co-Chair of the LGBTQ Rights and Concerns Committee for our Chapter, and I serve on the UUP Statewide counterpart of those Committees.

Despite passage of the ADA, University at Albany employees with disabilities still face accessibility barriers. As a person with a disability, I understand the issues. Last year, my wife and I got married, taking advantage of the NYS law which made it possible for gays and lesbians to get married. However, we still face discrimination at the Federal level.

It has been my privilege to work for equal rights for all, by serving you as a UUP Professional Delegate for the UA Chapter, and I would like to continue this work. Please consider electing me again.

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John A. (Jack) Gendron  
Staff Associate  
Financial Aid

I have been a member of the UUP Albany chapter serving the past six years as a Delegate and as a member of both UUP Statewide EOP and LGBTQ committees along with the Albany chapter's LGBTQ committee. I will continue to work in creating a cooperative environment between the University and its employees. Working daily as a professional at UAlbany with other professionals in many different student service departments offers me an excellent understanding of both the members' and campus needs. As a delegate, I will continue to support and bring these concerns to the forefront as well as continue to support the professional goals of all UUP members.

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Greta Petry  
Asst. Director of Community Relations

I would like to ask for your vote to a two-year term as professional delegate. One of the many reasons I am active in the union is because I believe in treating people fairly. I would like to serve another term as delegate because at the statewide level, delegates learn a great deal about issues cropping up at other SUNY campuses. This makes us better prepared to advocate for you on our own campus.

I am also honored to serve as chapter Grievance chair. I will do my best to help you, to make sure your contractual rights are protected. Thank you. -----

Tom Hoey  
Sr. Data Communications Analyst  
Data Communications

Again I ask for your vote as your UUP Delegate for Professionals. These past two years I have served on the Statewide UUP Solidarity committee, Capital District AFL/CIO delegate and our Chapters Solidarity, Parking and By-law committee. I am committed to having a strong Chapter Organization. Please Vote.

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Martin Manjak  
Information Security Officer  
OCIO

I would like to continue in the role of your professional delegate. In my first term, I served as the chair of the Newsletter committee, working to make The Forum an effective means of communication with chapter members, and a strong voice for union advocacy. As chair, I'm proud to say that the Forum has raised awareness and fostered debate over members' concerns, Forum articles have been republished by other UUP chapters, and your newsletter received a journalism award from UUP Statewide.

I also serve on UUP's Solidarity and Technology Issues committees. In the case of the latter, my IT background has proven valuable in addressing issues posed by the Chancellor's plans for shared services and on-line instruction.

## Academic Delegate Candidate Statements

James Collins

Prof. Linguistics and Cognitive Science  
Anthropology

My involvement in UUP spans 18 years as a Department Representative, member of the Chapter Executive Committee, Academic Vice President and Acting President. In all these roles I have worked to improve the union by connecting our Chapter to its members, the wider labor movement, and the wider society. Believing in unions as a source of democratic power, I have sought to involve members in union activities. Working as part of the Union Democracy Slate, I have encouraged union members to consider leadership roles; many of them are currently standing for Chapter offices. I ask for your vote again as an academic delegate serving on the Chapter Executive Committee. My priorities will be to engage members; recruit new leaders; improve the situation of contingent employees; and resist efforts to privatize and downsize our University.

Ivan Steen

Associate Professor, O'Leary Professor  
History

It is nice to see so many relatively new names as candidates for officer or delegate from the Albany Chapter; but at the same time it is important to elect candidates who contribute organizational knowledge and experience. This is especially important because the officers and delegates comprise the chapter's executive committee. I offer more than thirty years of UUP experience, including twelve years as the chapter's president and ten as vice president for academics.

Throughout the past thirty years I also have been active in advocating for UUP's goals with members of the state legislature. Currently, along with two former UUP statewide presidents, I am researching and writing a history of UUP, under contract with SUNY Press.

I am a recipient of UUP's Nina Mitchell Award for Distinguished Service, and the New York State

United Teachers Community Service Award. I am dedicated to serving our union and its members.

Lawrence S. Wittner, Ph.D.

Professor of History Emeritus

I am professor of history emeritus, having been a full-time faculty member at SUNY/Albany from 1974 to 2010. From 1979 to the present I have served as an Albany UUP academic delegate and executive committee member, including four years as Albany UUP vice president for academics. During my overall academic and scholarly career (which includes earlier teaching stints at Hampton Institute, Vassar College, and at Japanese universities), I have written eight books, edited or co-edited another four, authored hundreds of published articles, and received numerous awards.

I strongly believe that a union's job is to defend the rights of its members and, more broadly, to help create a just and better world. Accordingly, I was the first chair of UUP's statewide solidarity committee and have served on that committee for decades. In addition, I currently chair Albany UUP's solidarity committee and serve as executive secretary of the Albany County AFL-CIO.

Paul Stasi

Assistant Professor  
English

The state's responsibility to provide for its citizens has been consistently undermined by the decades long defunding of public education and the vilification of public employees. Our union needs to be at the forefront of the battle to preserve the right of the citizens of New York to affordable public education and to the job security that only comes with the collective bargaining power of the union.

I'm proud to be part of the Union Democracy Slate and to continue our efforts to reinvigorate UUP. Only by mobilizing our collective will can we hope to restore state funding to SUNY, defend the jobs of faculty and staff and fulfill the university's public mission.

Cynthia A. Fox  
Associate Professor, French Studies  
Department of Languages, Literatures and  
Cultures

The deactivation of the degree programs in French Studies has afforded me a special perspective on the ways in which the radical changes taking place in higher education today can affect the workplace that we thought we knew.

I am running for a second term as an Academic Delegate to UUP not to resist change, but to help assure that it does not compromise either accessibility, affordability, and quality of the education available to the citizens of New York or the principles of academic freedom that underpin it, and that our workplace is a safe and healthy environment where members are both treated fairly and equitably compensated for their efforts.

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Jennifer Greiman  
English

As unions across the US have found themselves increasingly embattled, I have been encouraged to see the Albany chapter of UUP become increasingly vibrant, democratic, and responsive to the needs and concerns of its members in recent years. As an academic delegate, I would help to continue the work of the Union Democracy Slate in its efforts to bring more members into active participation with the UUP, to collaborate with other campus unions, and to continue its strong support for academic freedom, tenure, and the protection of contingent faculty.

UUP provides a much-needed structure for discussion and collaboration among faculty and staff from different units, and I would particularly like to see opportunities for this kind of work formalized and strengthened.

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Ronald Friedman  
Associate Professor  
Psychology

I am an associate professor of Psychology, who has been teaching at UAlbany for 6 years. I have been active in UUP as part of the Peace and Justice committee, working to raise awareness regarding the human costs of war here and abroad. I have also worked to push back policy changes at the IRB that threatened academic freedom and have advocated with administration leaders for a more family-friendly academic calendar.

In the coming years, I would like to continue working with my dedicated colleagues in UUP to ensure that UAlbany is able to provide an accessible, high-quality education to students while offering to faculty and professionals a workplace exemplifying fairness, nurturance, respect, and job security.

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Gail Landsman  
Associate Professor Emerita  
Anthropology

I have served locally on our chapter’s Newsletter and Peace and Justice committees, and statewide on UUP’s Disability Rights and Concerns Committee. Having faced struggles raising three children during my UAlbany career, I am deeply committed to family-friendly policies.

Another major concern is the increasing commercialization of our university. A comprehensive liberal arts education should not be available only to those attending wealthy private colleges.

I am proud to have been part of an effort to encourage democracy and broader involvement of the general membership within our chapter. I am running for re-election to work together with you to preserve jobs and working conditions that enable us to maintain our core commitment to quality education and research in all disciplines, and to stand with students and families in defense of public education that is both financially and physically accessible.

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Eloise A. Brière  
 O'Leary Professor  
 French and Francophone Studies  
 Department of Languages, Literatures and  
 Cultures

I seek your vote for a second term as a delegate to UUP's statewide Assembly. Over the last 2 years I have attended the three annual State Assemblies to join forces with fellow UUPers to support our contract negotiations team and to seek solutions to the challenges imposed by NYS budget cuts and state defunding of public education.

Increased tuition passes on the financial burden to students and their families. The solution is not to cripple family budgets or SUNY's colleges and universities, but to put NYS tax dollars to work educating New York's students.

With fellow UUPers I will work to find solutions that protect the interests of our members in the face of these threats. Mindful of the importance of quality education for the children of New York's taxpayers, I will work with the delegates to the State-wide Assembly to seek solutions to strengthen UUP and regenerate SUNY.

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## UUP Affiliate Unions Delegate NYSUT Delegate and AFT Delegate

Tom Hoey  
 Sr. Data Communications Analyst  
 Data Communications

I would like to continue to represent you at the yearly Representative Assembly for NYSUT. As a member of the Higher Ed committee, I help insure important issues get brought forward to the assembly.

I also ask for your vote to again represent you at the Biennial Convention for AFT. The AFT convention allows us to network and find out about the labor movement across the country and bring higher-ed issues to the convention.

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## Candidates' Forum March 6

We will be hosting a candidates' forum on March 6<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 – 7:00 pm in the Standish Room on the 3<sup>rd</sup> level of the Science Library. The format will consist of every candidate, or their representative, speaking for up to 3 minutes. At the end of the statement period, after all candidates have had an opportunity to speak, the floor will be opened up to a question and answer period for the remainder of the scheduled two hours.



## **Academic Delegates**

### **Deborah LaFond**

Associate Librarian  
University Libraries

As Delegate for the past two years and Acting Chapter Secretary for 9 months, I have been actively engaged. The role of Secretary is much more than recording minutes and it has been a steep learning curve to understand the many intersecting organizations and players without the investment that an elected officer receives. This opportunity has offered insight for what is needed to strengthen and improve our work. My hope is that together we can assess what we need within a more transformative vision that considers and respects various styles of engagement and experience in discourse. The inclusive programs I have worked to share on this campus and in diverse professional associations I belong to (over 18 years) are evidence of the work I can do when considered an equal member at the table. I offer my continued commitment toward visions of UNITY that include Equity, Diversity, Dignity and Fair Play.

## **Professional Delegates**

### **Betty P. Shadrick, Ph.D**

Assistant Dean -Office of Graduate Studies

UUP continues to advocate for its membership. As an elected professional delegate, I desire to serve and represent you. Thus, I seek your vote for re-election. Our times demand a person with tact, diplomacy and good, solid values. These are traits that inform my actions and decisions. May I count on your support?

### **Bill Ziman**

Network Technician  
Data Communications

As a member of UUP (Albany) executive committee, I was involved in bylaw, parking, health and safety committees. I spent countless hours reviewing bylaws, from recommendation made, we have approved new bylaws in place. For Health and Safety, I was involved with Handicap problems, tunnel, and air quality issues reported by members. The parking committee has been addressing problems with parking management, contractor parking, CNSE overflow stealing spots, and those impacts on our faculty and staff. Working on the executive committee member, I have been involved in the faculty cutback issues in music and French, among others, and I attended protests for SUNY cutbacks/save hospital campaign at State Capitol. I believe I have done a good job as delegate, and I am asking for your vote. In Solidarity.